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Mennonite Women Artists

As a visual artist I hesitated to accept a request to compile this issue — not having tested my editing and writing skills—but my hunger for knowledge of other Mennonite women working in the arts outweighed my reluctance. Each contact with prospective contributors came as a gift, their stories echoing or enlightening my own experience.

I grew up in a General Conference Mennonite family in a small Kansas town. I began drawing at an early age. My parents encouraged my identity as an artist, as did my elementary school teachers. This was my anchor of confidence through all the little “insecurities” of childhood and adolescence—being too tall, or too fat, or too slow a runner, or too shy. At least I could draw. And I did—numerous illustrations for children’s Sunday school stories that my mother would tell in church, designs for clothing I wanted to sew, Christmas cards, posters and signs for school or community events.

I knew early on I would major in art and even avoided the more “practical” courses in art education, thinking they would lead me away from studio work. After college, trying to reconcile my vocation with the Mennonite teaching of service, I spent 2 years in a Voluntary Service unit in Chicago developing a children’s after-school art program. I also began to make connections with churches and non-profit organizations that wanted illustrations and graphics for their newsletters, bulletins and events.

I still live in Chicago and am married to an artist who also grew up in the Mennonite faith. I divide my time between my own work of creating artists books (one-of-a-kind or small-edition books that stretch the boundaries of the traditional book form—often using letterpress printing, handmade paper, original drawings or prints, hand-binding, and are frequently sculptural in nature), freelance work (illustrations, graphics and calligraphy), and teaching children’s art classes.

When considering how to focus an issue on Mennonite women artists, I realized what I wanted to know was how others’ experiences compared with mine. How did their lives as artists unfold? When did they discover their gifts? Were those around them supportive? Did growing up Mennonite affect their work? Does it still? Does being a woman affect their work? How about being *both* a woman and a Mennonite?

The personal stories herein tell of the contributors’ coming of age as artists, identifying the successes, struggles, missed opportunities and realized dreams that make up their different paths. They speak with honesty about both their frustrations and support within the Mennonite church and their experiences as women artists who are single or married or parents. They represent a diversity of involvement in the arts, from music, composition, dance and poetry to the visual arts and graphic design. Their experiences are individual and different but all include the deep sense that their creativity is a spiritual force, something they must do and are called to do.

Collectively we offer this issue to you that you may receive the gifts of creativity shared here. —*Teresa Pankratz*

Report readers will recognize the name of Teresa Pankratz, the talented, young artist whose crisp and evocative illustrations have graced the pages of this newsletter for the past couple of years.

by Dorothy Bowman

Kavannah

The Jewish people have a marvelous word to describe the kind of prayer that God desires—Kavannah. Kavannah is putting your whole heart into each word of prayer. Kavannah is speaking to God in your own special way: by singing, laughing, dancing or whispering. Kavannah is pleasing God through your prayers. The story to follow is about my Kavannah—told to encourage Kavannah through the arts.

Once upon a time a baby girl was born to a poor Mennonite farm couple. The girl was to grow up to be a dancer and storyteller. But no one knew that. Not her family, nor her school, nor her church, nor her

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community. They had never had a dancer or storyteller in their midst before and did not recognize the signs.

As the little girl grew she spent a great deal of time play-acting and telling stories to her dolls, which pleased and amused most everyone. The little girl also chanted. Sitting in a corner of the linoleum floor or riding the wagon in the field, her body and voice rocked and swayed as she recounted her small world-experiences. She danced too, on the wash stand, when she thought no one was looking, gleefully executing lively steps and supple twists and turns. All the while her family, and her school, and her church, and her community did not once suspect what the little girl would become.

The young girl went to school. The teachers told her which words to print and how many times. They told her she could play the drum in the rhythm band but only mouth the words when the choir sang.

The young girl went to church. She was taught to bow her head and fold her hands to pray. She memorized Bible verses and was told that dancing was a "sin."

She took piano lessons. One half-hour every day she practiced scales and sonatas.

She was a good student and learned many valuable skills and thought she was happy. But whenever the young girl could, she stole away into the woods or the hayloft and poured out her heart in ways that no one knew.

When she became a teen-ager she attended larger and larger schools that buzzed and whirled around her. She buzzed and whirled inside and now she knew she was unhappy.

During those years she danced only a little—frustrated attempts to imitate what she thought were the "right" moves. She felt the awkwardness of inexperience and shame over inclinations toward something so "worldly". But the gathering energy and the rhythm inside her body were real and as strong as the restraining voices of her family, and her school, and her church, and her community inside her head.

The tension eased for a year when she attended a small Mennonite high school. Friendships were soothing and fun. The school was art-minded, but emphasized music and fine art. The girl came and went with no perception of herself as an artist.

After high school the young woman travelled for a year. Away from those she had tried to please for so long, she experimented and explored. When she returned, she knew some of what she wanted. She married a Mennonite farmer and together they travelled to Brazil and worked there under MCC. She received a new picture of herself as a Christian, moving from a compulsion to be "good" toward a concept of living with a concern for others and being open and genuine before God.

By now she knew that she loved to dance, and she did dance. Not imitations of theatrical and social dance, but improvisational moves, unique and spontaneous. In the quiet dark, alone, poetry flowed from her heart, and she danced.

She longed to share her Kavannah with others, and searched for kindred spirits, spending some time within the charismatic context. She formed supportive relationships with other Mennonite women who were exploring faith expressions through the arts. Falteringly, because she had no models, she began to express her Kavannah experience and the desire for a teacher who could bring dance and religious faith together. To her amazement, her search led her to a Quaker woman who had just moved in across her backyard, a teacher of creative dance who had spent the previous year exploring liturgical dance at Pendle Hill Retreat Center. The teacher versed the beginner in the basics of dance, believed in her student's gift, and nurtured her Kavannah.

The floodgate was opened. The buzzing and whirling, the gathering energy, the suppressed creativity and the years of silent emotion were released. Healing began. Body, mind and soul came together.

Over the years, joy and peace with her Kavannah increased. She began to understand that for her, to NOT dance was a "sin." But there were few who understood. A gift from God needs to be shared, but her gift caused fear, nervousness and rejection within her church.

The woman persisted, dancing mostly in privacy, but depending greatly on her friends' support. She taught classes to community children, incorporated creative movement into Sunday school classes, and occasionally danced in a church service. To her delight, the Mennonite Festival of Worship in 1986 included a dance workshop and liturgical dance in the worship services. Here she met others with urgings to dance.



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"Because art is individualistic, often not community-oriented (although the community surely benefits), I struggle with the selfishness in my desire to take time away from church and family to do it."

A year ago the woman, now in her mid-30s, discovered the world of storytelling, and since then has been bringing story and dance together in her work, finding that the combination appeals to a wider audience. At last her family, and her school, and her church, and her community are beginning to value active faith expression and give her more opportunities to exercise her gifts.

The woman now has a daughter of her own and when she tucks her in at night and tells her this story, she ends it by saying, "When I dance, God dances, too. When I tell a story, God tells it, too." And her little daughter whispers, "Me too, Mommy. Me too."

Dorothy Bowman is a storyteller and dancer living in Baden, Ontario. She has been doing solo and collaborative performances since 1982 as well as teaching classes and workshops to all ages in schools, churches and community centers.

by Jean Janzen

Nobody or Somebody?

*I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! They'd advertise—you know!*

*How dreary—to be—Somebody!
How public—like a Frog—
To tell one's name—the livelong June—
To an admiring Bog!*

This well-known poem by Emily Dickinson carries the double message of personal power—that power and powerlessness are both good and dangerous. Emily's life experience led her to conclude that fame would not come her way and that she needed to strengthen her inner self to keep herself from disappearing. "How dreary to be Somebody!" may sound like sour grapes, but Emily also knew the danger of that to the artist. As I work at poetry, I see the duplicity, and also struggle with the reality and paradox of being a Nobody or a Somebody.

My childhood was typically Mennonite as we know it in the United States, mixed with a good dose of revivalism. I was taught to be quiet, submissive, pious and agreeable. I did not have serious career plans, but serious marriage

plans. Parental concerns were focused on my five brothers' careers; my two sisters and I should marry right. Like Emily, I did some questioning of tradition and faith in high school and college, but unlike Emily I did not take a strong stance of individual pursuit in my faith or in the arts.

Marriage, family and the church consumed most of my energy for 25 years, a time in which I grew as a person. Our society pressed both political and personal issues on me, so that these were both good and restless years. My husband encouraged me to go back to school for enrichment and security. The children were a field for creativity as well as for care. Our church congregation, which includes a number of professionals and a few artists, became a forum for a mix of devotion and exploration which I cherish and which continues to nourish me. Women's gifts were recognized and valued earlier in College Community Mennonite Brethren of Clovis, Calif. than in many Mennonite Brethren churches, and I benefit from leadership opportunities.

I wrote poems in grade school, collected them, and tied them up with yarn, a small collection which I kept. In high school and college I wrote only occasional pieces. I was 35 years old when my friend, teacher and fellow writer, Wilfred Martens, suggested that I write—something I could do at home. A fourth child delayed my pursuit, but when he began school, I gathered some Christians (mostly Mennonites) writers around me for monthly meetings.

One of them brought a poet to the meeting who directed me to California State University of Fresno where I discovered I had possibilities as a poet. The poets at the university have been important models, critics and friends.

Encouraging responses from magazine editors and the poet Luci Shaw were important in the fragile beginnings. Also crucial was the willingness of Paul Toews of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies to publish my first collection, *Words for the Silence*, and the strong support of Merle and Phyllis Good who included me in *Three Mennonite Poets*.

How is one drawn to pursue an art? I think for me it was the power of good writing which impressed me so much during my young adult years—that goose-flesh response, that sharp ache when you know something is true and you have been awakened to it. Something deep and unspoken within me rose up when my husband asked me at an anniversary dinner (maybe the 20th or so) what else I would like to do with my life (besides mothering), and my response, a surprise even for me, was that I would like to



write something that someone else would like to read. I am deeply grateful that this has happened; I receive it as a gift.

Being a Mennonite has affected me as a poet in mostly positive ways. The Christian faith and upbringing is a strong base for good literature—the hymns, scriptures and prayers, the faith in the revelation and mystery of God, the Mennonite social concern for the poor and distressed, all have given me a view of the larger world which is the mirror of art.

On the negative side, the fear of worldliness and the separation from the broader culture have sometimes been a limitation. The Mennonite-ethnic admiration for hard work and productivity also works negatively, because art takes time and often there is little to show for it. Because art is individualistic, often not community-oriented (although the community surely benefits), I struggle with the selfishness in my desire to take time away from church and family to do it.

Herbert Leibowitz in the introduction to a comprehensive journal of poems and essays on women poets in *Parnassus*, 1985, labels the increase in the last 10 years in women writing poetry a veritable earthquake. He describes us as divers and climbers, bravely delving into the depths of our history and experience, and climbing toward the rare air of new vision and possibility in elevations long held mostly by men. We are reading women whose work has been hidden. We are experiencing both the benefits and malignities of shared power with men. I am part of a spectacular movement; the terrain is slippery.

So I end with the encouragement and warnings of Emily Dickinson: to be a poet one has to be a Nobody. The very act of art, of writing, requires a humility, a giving of oneself up to work. Social conditions forced a Nobody condition on Emily, as it has to some extent on us, and she recognized both its positive and negative sides. But to be Emily's kind of Nobody, one has to have an inner core of Somebody. Emily fed her intellectual and spiritual self consistently with reading, reflection, correspondence and writing. She removed herself from traditional demands as best she could to give her voice and genius to the world on those small scraps of paper.

Can we give space and time to even those of us much less gifted than Emily? Can we allow eccentricity and individual pursuit, supporting each other because "There is a pair of us?" Uniting together as women artists in one way, although it runs the danger of polarization and banishment.

Uniting and supporting each other as artists, both male and female, and as Christians using our gifts, is a better solution. Society has enough "frogs proclaiming names to Bogs." What we need is truth told in fresh ways, for a great power lies in that, and I believe that Mennonite women have much to give.

Matryoshka Dolls

There are nine of them
nested one inside the other
like short, stout bowling pins,
flat faces, their arms
painted to their sides.

Notice the outside one
has an apron like a meadow,
her lips tied into a small, red bow.
The second one with a pink apron
is smiling, her eyes to the side.
Next, the orange one
looks straight forward,
her mouth in a round "oh."

As they get smaller
their brows creep closer
to the eyes. They look
worried and angry. Each one
has less room for flowers
on her apron.

The last one,
so tiny and hard.
Her mouth is a black dot,
and she doesn't come apart.
Don't lose her.

copyright, Jean Janzen
First printed in *Words for the Silence*

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif. Her poems have been published in two collections, several anthologies, and literary and Christian magazines. She also teaches piano, is her congregation's worship minister and tries to practice hospitality.

The opening verse is from *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown and Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers and trustees of Amherst College from the poems of Emily Dickinson, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, Copyright 1951, (c) 1955, 1979, 1983, by the president and fellows of Harvard College.

"I have studied English literature and history, I have taught school and I have parented. But in the end I always have to admit that what lies at the core of my being is music."

"We as Mennonites have always had a special respect for the 'helping' professions. They seem so obviously 'Christian' with their emphasis on caring and healing. The arts, on the other hand, have seemed decorative, non-essential."

by Carol Dyck

A Golden Braid

I have always been a singer, but I didn't begin writing music until I found myself at home with two small children. My first songs were designed for my own voice, but gradually I began writing for other voices, for choirs and instruments. Since I also generally use my own lyrics, songwriting became a way of working out problems, of finding out how I see the world and how I define my faith.

My life's path has not been single-minded or direct. Particularly in relation to music, there has been a lot of approach-avoidance behavior. My college voice teacher persuaded me to give up the idea of following my father in a medical career because I "had the power to heal people's souls through music!"

Misty-eyed and without real guidance, I accepted the mission, an experience which ended, inevitably, in my first confused and frustrated rejection of the music world. It's a tough competitive business and one had better begin with that understanding. Since then I have tried other things. I have studied English literature and history, I have taught school and I have parented. But in the end I always have to admit that what lies at the core of my being is music.

Any choice involves costs, and my eventual decision to go back and pursue music has had its price. It has cost me the possibility of economic independence or of equal earning power with my husband. Granted, motherhood originally put me in that position, but it is music now that keeps me there. My husband, with a doctorate in psychology, has a unique government position as overseer of suicide prevention. I write music for commissions, sing in a professional choir, teach voice in several institutions and carry a full assistantship load as a graduate student—and I still earn a fraction of what my husband earns. And I suppose I always will. I have to admit this hurts; not, I trust, because of the social meaning connected with being paid well for the work you do.

We as Mennonites have always had a special respect for the "helping" professions. They seem so obviously

"Christian" with their emphasis on caring and healing. The arts, on the other hand, have seemed decorative, non-essential. When the country finds itself in economic recession, as it is now, funding for the arts is one of the first things to go. The government also sees art as a rather self-indulgent luxury. I may know all the arguments against that view of the arts, but I am not beyond moments of self-doubt. Sometimes on a day when my physician-father and my husband have been out there saving lives, and I have spent hours trying to decide exactly which sounds to string together, I wonder if I am indeed a pampered woman who can afford to indulge my interests and do such pleasant things only because my husband is earning the real money for the mortgage. (This is a suggestion I have met with more than once, usually from male "friends" who jokingly call me a "kept" woman). This underlying sense of the tenuousness of my own status and respectability is another price I pay for being a musician. If I were a lawyer I don't imagine I would have that problem to face.

As a singer, I enjoy performing anywhere, but as a songwriter I need immediacy, intimacy and connectedness. I need to feel that I am speaking to and with and about a specific group of people whom I regard as my community. For me, that community has been my congregation. It has provided me with many of the life stories, experiences and theological dilemmas I have written about. It has also provided me with an enthusiastic, talented and supportive group of performers who seem endlessly willing to endure the hard work of turning my ideas into audible realities. If, once it is created, my music moves out of that setting into the larger world, I am happy to see it go. But this community has been the womb in which my imagination's offspring have been nurtured into being.

In 1984, for example, 60 members of our choir travelled to Strasbourg, France to sing at the Mennonite World Conference. We performed a cantata I had written called "Every Deliverance," in which I had set to music a story from the life of an elderly woman in our congregation. As a young woman, she had escaped from Russia with her entire village by crossing the Amur River into China on a very cold December night. It was a wonderfully exciting story.

I saw the children in our group begin to look at that woman with awe and I saw young people becoming curious about their history as Mennonites, and proud of their association with a group that had lived such exciting stories. For a long time after that trip, we heard talks and sermons that had grown out of the ideas people had encountered in that

• **For Further Reading**

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their Relation to Music. New York: Coward-McCann. 1948

• Greer, Germaine. *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux. 1979

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• Spretnak, Charlene, ed. *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday. 1982.

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Journal of an Artist. New York: Pantheon Books. 1982.

Artists' Groups

The Storytellers School of Toronto
412-A College St.
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1T3

The Sacred Dance Guild
Box 177
Peterborough, N.H. 03458
(has regional chapters)

program. We had performed it a dozen times, so it was deeply ingrained in all of our minds. It pleases me not only to have created a pleasurable experience for my friends, but to have stimulated new thinking. It may not make my fortune, but I can't think what I might do that would be more important—or more fun!

I am currently working on a choral song cycle which was commissioned as a memorial to a young man in our congregation who took his own life. We were close friends and it has been agonizing for me to have to search for a response to his death. Is it possible to celebrate intelligence and sensitivity without celebrating the despair that so often accompanies those qualities? Is there some understanding we can reach by acknowledging the aching hungers and longings we all will know as long as we live? What I write will express my own reaction, but I would also like to provide a form in which we—as a community—can think and feel and speak as one in response to an event that has shaken all of our lives.

While there are problems in trying to live as a musician, there are also joys. The very act of singing is for me exhilarating. Some of the most profoundly moving moments of my life have grown out of sharing performances of my music. As a writer, there is also the deep satisfaction that any craftsperson understands, the sense of awe in having made something where before there was nothing. When you have solved all the little problems and put all the little pieces together, the creature you have shaped takes on a life of its own. It exists as an entity apart from you. But you are the creator. It is indeed a god-like feeling.

Without question, my work and my view of what it means to be an artist, are affected by the fact that I am a woman. But I don't fully understand that effect. I have certain incapacities which I like to blame on my socialization or on the lazy side of my brain, whichever has made what I am. But I'm never sure which of my strengths and weaknesses are common to women and which simply belong to me as an individual. At the very least, I believe my femaleness has given me a perspective on life that differs from much of what I encounter in the world. Although I grieve for the women throughout history who have functioned within such severe limitations on their development, at the same time I believe that the work women have done is important and is based on life-sustaining values of caring relatedness to others. I am proud of the feeling, ideas and values that have been considered traditionally female, even if they have been repressed and devalued by the system.

I will end with the lyrics of a song I wrote and performed with my daughter, a cellist. It is a song of calm self-respect and contentment which is deeply rooted in an intertwining of one's own life with others' lives, in the braiding together of stories around tables, and in magazines like this one.



Shalom

Lovely
I am lovely
Lovely is my name.

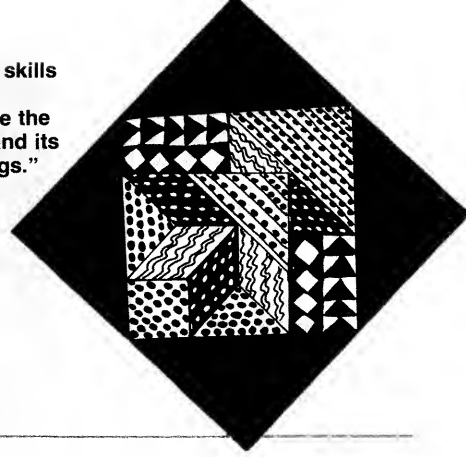
I have set oranges on the tables for the friends who are whispering.
Several stories rise and mingle,
mingle,
and fall again
a golden braid,

while outside the child is dancing,
new shoes in the green grass.
Silver laughter springs and splashes down the sun-slope
from the window to the table
and she sings,

Lovely
I am lovely
Lovely is my name. ■

Carol Dyck is a singer, composer, teacher and graduate student living in Edmonton, Alberta. Her music is written for voice and instruments using lyrics that she says come "out of my own history and my own evolving theologies."

"For someone taught the skills of tailoring it was a breakthrough to recognize the beauty of a frayed edge and its possible multiple meanings."



by Erma Martin Yost

Raw Edges, Dangling Threads

At Noho Gallery in New York City at my last opening reception a Mennonite whispered in my ear, "I am trying to pick out the Mennos here." Fifty percent of my mailing list and 50 percent of my collectors are Mennonites, and that proportion feels comfortable. I appreciate enormously the support and interest of my many Mennonite friends, but I find it stimulating to rub shoulders with a large and varied community of contemporary artists. In many ways I think, feel and act Mennonite, but if a room gets too full of Mennos, the artist in me wants to challenge the instant familiarity.

So why then after 15 years of painting have I returned to the familiar quilt patch as a central part of my art work? It was not a nostalgic look in the rearview mirror, nor an intentional search for "roots", and definitely not a commercial ploy to cash in on the current popularity of quilts. It was simply an evolution.

I tend to work in series for my exhibitions every two years at Noho Gallery. After I had painted my third "Canyon Walls" series I wanted to explore new ideas and media and took some time off from painting. During my hiatus I made some quilted jackets. A lot of experimentation followed which resulted in my current work, best described as "assemblage" incorporating quilt patches, cyanotypes, drawings, paintings and found objects.

The quilt patches are not quilted per se and actually stand for things other than themselves such as mountain ranges, birds in flight, or frames around drawings. I let raw edges show and threads dangle which match neither themselves nor the fabric they hold together. For someone taught the skills of tailoring it was a breakthrough to recognize the beauty of a frayed edge and its possible multiple meanings.

I also incorporate imagery dealing with the ancient rock art of the Anasazi Indians of the American Southwest. My husband, Leon Yost, a photographer, and I make numerous trips annually to that area where we are documenting those 1,000- to 2,000-year-old paintings on canyon walls. Meanings and interpretations of those images is largely

speculative, but many of them seem to relate to ceremony or ritual—petitions for a good hunt, a good rain and harvest. The settings where those images are found seem to definitely suggest that place, community and religion were of the highest importance—as was harmony with the land and nature. For me there is visceral recognition of tribal rites.

Juxtaposing references to rock art with references to quilt designs may seem incongruent, but both represent things authentic from my past and present experiences. It is precisely this tension and ambiguity that I like to explore and where I find new meanings.

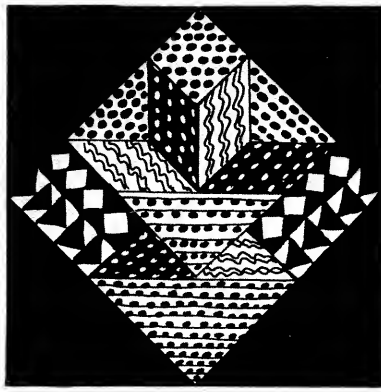
How did I journey from growing up in Wakarusa, Ind. to becoming a full-time artist (and half-time art teacher)? I was the last of five siblings, the oldest being 15 years older and the closest in age already in first grade when I was born. With no playmates, no great quantity of toys, and certainly no television, I found many ways to entertain myself, a favorite being to paint on the back of leftover wallpaper rolls.

From first grade through 12th my talents were recognized, but it was always a huge mystery to me. I wasn't making things to win contests. I just liked to make things, often to embellish an otherwise mediocre assignment. Other times it was my only escape from the pain of having been diagnosed with childhood epilepsy. While some assumed I was doomed to a life of dependency, I grew fiercely independent and introspective, developing a strong sense of self and direction.

My decision to become an artist was not an easy one. My family did not encourage me to major in art, but they did have a deep respect for things handmade and beautiful: quilts, dishes, flowers and fine craftsmanship. I am thankful they had enough restraint and faith in me to not discourage me either.

That was not the case at the Mennonite College I attended for two years from 1965 to 1967. There I received very bad advice from people in very high places. I was told "art was not a service profession." Another said, "The only use the church has for an artist is to illustrate for Scottsdale and that position is filled." More than one Ph.D. warned that I would have to draw nudes if I went to art school. In the dorm, friends advised that I would never meet a nice Mennonite boy to marry if I transferred to a non-Mennonite college.

"In many ways I think, feel and act Mennonite, but if a room gets too full of Mennos, the artist in me wants to challenge the instant familiarity."



"I was awestruck by the fact that I was able to produce something which had the power to elicit such positive reactions."

It took a huge leap of faith to reject all of this well-intentioned advice, but I received so much affirmation from sources knowledgeable and active in the arts (and outside the Mennonite community) that I had no doubt about my own sense of talent. Still it took courage to listen to my own inner voice and step away from a "cookie cutter" mentality that would have shaped me into a more acceptable role.

For the past 15 years Leon and I have lived in Jersey City, N.J., considered a "blighted" neighborhood when we bought our row house. It provides us with living and ample studio space in close proximity to the artists, galleries and art supply stores just across the river in New York City's Soho where we are both members of an artists' co-op, Noho Gallery. We are 35 artists who incorporated ourselves, sharing the expense and work of running a gallery, and taking turns exhibiting our work.

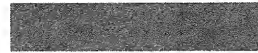
This type of gallery demands a serious commitment of time and money, and for me this commitment is a boost to my creative process. I am part of a community of working artists, always exploring and exchanging new ideas. Faced with a solo exhibition every two years, I cannot put off working, but must work in a disciplined and regular way—resulting in increased risk-taking, discovery and growth.

For me the exhibition is an important part of being an artist. While the artist finishes a work in studio solitude, the viewer completes the work. The varied interpretations and ensuing dialogue between the work and the viewer, and the viewer and myself enriches all. Without the exhibition the works simply accumulate in the studio.

One Mennonite artist recently asked about my experiences and exhibitions at Noho Gallery; he listened patiently to my answer and then said, "For myself, I'm not interested in scrambling to the top of the heap." It had never occurred to me before that trying to work to one's fullest potential and using the available opportunities at one's disposal would be interpreted as such. An exhibition in my view is not an attempt to gain fame and glory for oneself, but a way of sharing one's gift. That is what I try to do. ■

Erma Martin Yost is a visual artist living in New Jersey. In addition to her exhibits at the Noho Gallery, she participates in numerous solo and juried exhibits throughout the country. Her work is featured in the 1987 winter issue of *American Quilter*.

by Judith Rempel Smucker



Urban-Rural Maze

Sitting at the farm kitchen table in rural Manitoba as a youngster, drawing horses and pigs, house facades and women's shoes is an apt prelude to a profession in graphic design.

When I was about 11, my parents went out for the evening and I pulled out some leftover paint-by-number oil paint and painted a landscape on a board I found in the basement. My mother shrieked with delight when she saw it. I was awestruck by the fact that I was able to produce something which had the power to elicit such positive reactions.

I will always be grateful to my family for encouraging me to develop my artistic skills. Their subtly expressed concern about the practicality or morality of plaster-coated jeans and Botticelli's Venus effectively restrained any pride that may have resulted from Mother's shriek.

But the more effective restraint was the shock of suddenly living in the noisy, paved city. It took me a while to realize that from a spiritual perspective, the countryside isn't necessarily more holy than the city, just more secure and affirming. I attended the university school of art where people seemed to put more energy into being odd than being artists. I lived somewhat of a schizophrenic existence—in the city during the week, but high-tailing it home every weekend to family, church community and the solace of the farm.

Looking back on those years in Winnipeg, I realize that I did learn to tolerate the city and certainly to find accessible stimulation for creative design. Living in Basel, Switzerland for a year and a half more recently confirmed this. Museums and galleries are exciting, and an artistic community energetically breeds fresh ideas and design concepts.

"I attended the university school of art where people seemed to put more energy into being odd than being artists. I lived somewhat of a schizophrenic existence—in the city during the week, but high-tailing it home every weekend to family, church community and the solace of the farm."

"The ongoing lesson I continue to learn from explaining Botticelli to the baffled is patience and tolerance. I have had no desire to engage in conflict with the church on the question of the validity of art."

But here I am in small-town Lancaster County, away from many of these things and it takes work to find the stimulation, although I am convinced it exists. Fortunately, I have always lived close enough to interesting centers to undertake occasional field trips. A year ago I attended an exhibit opening in Philadelphia and, upon being introduced to a slick, rather caricatured New York designer, was asked, "And where do YOU work?" I told him, "Lancaster County." With a wan smile he purred, "Well... bringing graphic design to rural America. How nice!" I was indignant at first, then amused, and more recently rather intrigued by the prospect of integrating these different aspects of my life.

The spiritual thread of my personal Christian faith pushed its way gently but deliberately through the urban-rural maze. The morality questions my family raised really were more practical questions growing out of genuine concern: "So, Jude, how do you plan to buy your bread and butter?" The ongoing lesson I learn from explaining Botticelli to the baffled is patience and tolerance.



I have had no desire to engage in conflict with the church on the question of art's validity. However, I feel fortunate to be able to find professional work with non-profit organizations like Mennonite Central Committee and various community service agencies that enable me to apply my fullest energies and my highest standards to church- and social service-related work.

As I get older, I've made a discovery which my parents, grandparents and their friends made a long time ago: life

is always full of snags and limitations. I see these older folks celebrating their faith and living innovatively in spite of constant restraints. A striking parallel between this phenomenon and my graphic design has begun to emerge.

Take, for example, a poster project: slim budget, so the job will print two-colors only, size 8 1/2-by-11 inches, with only three type styles and sizes, and—here's the crunch—must be completed within one week. With such limitations, the designer is free to explore to a much greater degree, without the burden of having to make endless arbitrary decisions. That energy can be channeled into stretching what at first appears restrictive into a brilliant, original solution. Stimulation is all around us, even in seemingly banal circumstances. The mundane fosters ideas when turned askew or scrutinized closely. I continue to look for practical ways to turn things upside down to observe new perspectives.

All of us have the capacity to probe our visual consciousness and I am fascinated by the layperson's contribution to the design process. I have found it impossible and intolerable to divide the world into those who appreciate "good design" and those who don't. Each person's reaction to coloring book fantasies or the waning winter light across a stubble field is legitimate.

For me, graphic design is a vital form of communication and I see my role as an interpreter of the written message. Graphic designers must continue to seek ways to translate concepts and ideas into visual form and bring order to information. There is a great need for clear and imaginative visual, social, economic and spiritual lives. A sense of rightness and belonging goes a long way in a cluttered society where words and language are crucial prerequisites to cooperation. ■

Judith Rempel Smucker and her husband live in Akron, Pa. She is a full-time free-lance graphic designer.

"I trace my strengths and weaknesses in my use of sound to two factors besides a lack of aptitude. Earlier than I learned piano or to sing I learned from my father to recognize bird songs...listening for the texture as much as for the tone of the sound. Then, before I had learned the workings of diatonic scale, I encountered

quarternotes and ragas in India. The result was a jumble of musical definitions that left me confused, fascinated and self-depreciative..."



by Kamala Platt

Visual Non Sequiturs.

In the 10 years since I graduated from high school, art has been a major focus of my life. For the majority of my peers these years have been a time of completing school and passing into the job market, often marrying and starting families as well.

As a young, single woman artist, I find myself working in many worlds. For me, being an artist has meant living on minimal income while being abundantly educated. It has meant living in poor sections of the city, painting murals with public artists and attending cultural events with the "rich and famous." It has also meant building porches, installing sinks, painting houses and raising vegetables in exchange for rent. My chosen lifestyle has at times alienated me from my peers, but it has also brought me into friendship with a rich diversity of people who share an appreciation for the power and beauty of aesthetic work.

Some of my earliest memories are of drawings I made and artwork I saw. I remember being adventurous, if not always successful, in art classes and often outside as well. Although I have always been most adept at visual and written art work, many kinds of aesthetic expression have intrigued me.

At present, I see my life as a continual exploration of interests and passions—whose discovery furthers new interests and passions. My artwork is a means of discovering and recording that progression. It is a means of communicating what I find most important, humorous, beautiful, grotesque or tragic. It is also a way of sharing humanness with the next person on a level in which words and materials have new meaning.

The work I am doing presently is diverse. I began a master of fine arts program in poetry at Bowling Green University in Ohio this fall. This past summer I prepared for an exhibit which will go up in December at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. The pieces I am working on now are primarily assemblage—sculptural collages—of various "unrelated" objects so that they compose an integral piece of work based in the distinctive relationships of the parts.

In the broad sense, all my work in various art forms is similar. I combine various pieces of information that seem initially incongruous but have underlying connections that reveal visual non sequiturs and new meanings. The resulting sense is a distinctive, metaphorical view, sometimes a visual parable.

In my experience the dynamic process of art is self-propelling. Through the process the artist changes. Thus each new piece is begun again from a new point and has already been influenced by the work that has been done before it.

Although I have never considered myself "ethnic Mennonite," the influence of the Mennonite community in which I did most of my growing up has been strong. I accept the peace and social justice tradition without embracing the ethnic and religious stances as my own. Though this has set me apart, it has also pulled me closer to those whose theology leaves room for diversity and to those whose lifestyle and/or background differs from community norms. It has also made possible adjustments into other communities and culture, particularly in India as a child.

My cross-cultural heritage affects my artwork, directly and indirectly, philosophically and materially. In my visual art, for example, I often focus on colors, studying the interactions, perceiving the variations in emotions that color combinations produce, and determining what combination is most pleasing and most expressive for the particular work at hand. There are deep tones of burgundy, forest green, and dark blue that I fall back on again and again as favorites.

Recently, in looking through old photos, I realized that these were shades often used to dye the saris made in the district of India where we lived. Sambalpuri cloth had been used in our house since before I was born. This weaving was a distinct tradition that did not die out when the British industrialized cloth production, because the women refused to wear mill-made saris for Hindu religious ceremony. As a child, I was introduced to this weaving as art. For me the definition "art" was never a narrow concept of sculpture, painting and printmaking, nor was my exposure limited to the male-dominated Western tradition that many schools teach almost exclusively.

When as a college sophomore I viewed Mayan sculpture and contemporary Mexican artists side by side in Mexico City museums, I was moved by the work and by what I perceived as a universal language and began to consider studying art seriously in college.

"I became more aware of the Fraktur drawings of my grandmother and was intrigued by her beautiful calligraphy and illuminations. I was impressed that a Mennonite woman 100 years ago pursued art and that it was a part of her educational instruction."

After two more years at Bethel, I went to a graduate program in interdisciplinary arts at Columbia College in Chicago. There I studied not only visual art but learned some basic concepts and skills in dance, music, drama and writing. The Columbia program focused on the interrelatedness of the art forms as well as the distinctive language of each. A natural progression for me at this point was into performance art. In performance work, two or more art forms are combined to stage a work that is presented before an audience.

I was most intimidated and enthusiastic by the dance/movement section of my graduate study. Again, the main exposure I had had to this art form previously was in India. The ornate costume and graceful limb and body movement—the Indian dance I'd seen was for the most part stationary—influenced my work.

From childhood on, I'd had a love-hate battle with music. In fifth grade I went to piano lessons in tiny monochromatic, windowless room on Friday afternoons and was certain that my piano teacher thought I was retarded. Choir, clarinet, piano never came easy for me, but I was fascinated by sound and liked participating. I trace my strengths and weaknesses in my use of sound to two factors besides a lack of aptitude. Earlier than I learned piano or really learned to "sing" I learned from my father to recognize bird songs. In this process, I learned to listen for the texture as much as the tone of the sound. Then, before I had learned the working or diatonic scale, I had encountered quartertones and ragas in India. The result was a jumble of musical definitions that left me confused, fascinated and self-depreciatory in front of my more traditionally musical friends in high school and college.

In Chicago, I was allowed to look to the world outside the symphony hall or the choral room for music. Until then, I had considered myself musically inept. Since then, sound has been an important part of my performance work. Often I've collaborated with friends who have the technical skills that I do not. I also make use of non-traditional instruments.

I'd like to pass on one of the last discoveries in sound that was shared with me recently:

Take a rack out of your oven. Tie two strings onto it. Wrap the other ends of the strings around your index fingers. Put your fingers in your ears and lean over so that the rack dangles beneath you. Have a fellow performer ready with chopsticks, silverware, glasses, pencils and whatever other paraphernalia you wish to test. Have her or him

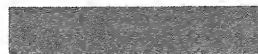
strike the rack gently with the various items. Then trade roles.

Like much performance art, the oven rack experience blurs the distinction between artist and audience. Both parties are participants. Both parties are necessary. For me, art as its best is a means of expression, communication and inspiration between "consenting adults" and children, across cultures and centuries. It is a network of catalysts that are ever changing; it gives us new points of view and new landscapes, to view from old-time landmarks.

Who am I as a woman, an artist and a Mennonite? I am the convening of several traditionally opposing forces, for one thing. And in that convening, and more generally in the late recognition of women as artists, is the realization that the universal "what it is" called artists is not mutually exclusive to the universal experience of "what it is" to be woman, is the acceptance of heritage that carries traditions which must be separated out as living or dead by each individual herself. ■

Kamala Platt uniquely integrates writing, visual and performance art into her work. She is presently studying poetry in a graduate program at Bowling Green University in Ohio and working on upcoming exhibits and performances.

by Ethel Ewert Abrahams



My Art Pilgrimage

It seems like I have always been interested in art. As a very young child, my father would entertain me with his drawings. He loved to draw horses and I was fascinated by his ability to sketch. Occasionally my older sister would allow me to use her pastel crayons to add color to my drawings. In public school, art periods were encouraged and it was a special time for me whether it was crafts—leatherwork, papier-mache—or drawing in the school yard on a lovely day.

My desires weren't entirely satisfied, however. I begged for art lessons but it was the mid-30s; the economy was depressed. My parents could only afford piano lessons,

- **Women in Worldwide Church**

- In Los Angeles, Roman Catholic Archbishop Roger Mahoney issued a *pastoral letter urging greater acceptance of women in church leadership roles* and the purging of liturgical texts of exclusive or sexist language.

woman named Rasalama who was speared to death. Among commemorative events was an international symposium on Christian witness in today's world.

- "Poverty, Profligacy and Prophecy" was the theme of the *International Association of Women Ministers* which met in Bristol, England in July.

- This past summer in Madagascar the church marked the *150th anniversary of its first Christian martyr, a Malagasy*

- The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church has approved a *policy encouraging clergy candidates to use inclusive language for God*. The new policy is not as strict as a controversial ruling passed a year earlier requiring ministry candidates to refer to God in inclusive terms such as "Mother and Father" or in gender-neutral terms such as "Creator" or "Redeemer."

- The Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran Church in America has adopted *formal guidelines on sexual harassment* in the church, in what is probably the first case of a synod laying down rules on sexual harassment.

and voice lessons for my sister who had a promising voice. If I would concentrate on piano until I could accompany my sister, my turn would come to take art lessons from the professor at the local college.

I worked arduously at the piano but by the time I could barely struggle through songs, my sister was a fine musician and would/could not depend on a struggling pianist. My mother did, however, keep her promise. In junior high, I took some art lessons for several months, soon realizing that copying calendar pictures with the art professor filling in the difficult part of the picture was not my idea of art instruction.

About this time I became more aware of the Fraktur drawings of my grandmother (dated 1838-1845) and was intrigued by her beautiful calligraphy and illuminations. I was impressed that a Mennonite woman 100 years ago pursued art and that it was a part of her educational instruction.

During my high school years I never turned down opportunities to make school posters or draw illustrations in my term papers and essays. I wanted to attend Bethany College to study under Sandzen but Bethel was "our" college. I didn't really object because most students didn't get to go on to school. College was a privilege. Elementary education was the lucrative course to pursue—it was World War II. I refused to take the loyalty oath which elementary teachers were required to sign. So, since Norman and I were just recently married, I followed him, working in Colorado Springs and Washington, D. C. as a secretary.

Years passed, graduate school for Norman and the rearing of four children. While the children were at home we enjoyed many art projects. We made puppet and marionette theaters, complete with lights, scenery and designed costumes. We fashioned and fired clay heads, hands and feet for the characters and made elaborate clothes and stage sets; we even went on the "road" giving programs.

These were fun years with the children and indirectly I was doing creative work. As the children grew older I realized the time was right for me to continue my formal art education; at a family council I received full endorsement. The children and my husband were very supportive and opportunities fell in place. The community

and the church also allowed areas in which I could express myself creatively. Actually I've turned down more avenues of artistic commitments that I have pursued. I wanted art to be an avocation!

Ethel Ewert Abrahams is a visual artist living in Hillsboro, Kan. As well as pursuing her own art work in the area of printmaking and coordinating various exhibits, she has done extensive research on the Mennonite art of Fraktur—resulting in a published book and numerous articles.



- The United Methodist Church's controversial hymnal committee first decided to include at least one hymn referring to God as Mother—and then rescinded its decision out of concern over possible negative reaction by conservative Methodists. "Let's not shoot ourselves in the foot as we near the finish line," the Rev. Charles Smith warned the committee on Oct. 13 before its members voted 11-10 to exclude the hymn "Strong Mother God." After strong constituent criticism, the committee recently reversed a decision to omit the hymn "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" because of its militaristic imagery.
- *Men, Women and God: Christians for Biblical Unity* has been formed by several women who left the Evangelical Women's Caucus after it adopted a controversial resolution in support of civil rights for homosexuals and recognizing the presence of a lesbian minority within EWC last year. Former EWC member Catherine Clark Kroeger, acting Protestant chaplain at Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., is serving as temporary chair of the new organization.
- About 80 North American church women met in Stony Point, N.Y. in September to propose ways to implement an ecumenical decade on "the churches in solidarity with women." The decade, to begin next Easter, was declared by the World Council of Churches. Suggestions made included a focus on violence against women and a goal of redirecting 5 percent of U.S. and Canadian military budgets to fund women's programs.

We encourage and invite letters from readers that speak to the issues raised and the perspectives presented in Report. Although we try to print all letters, some may be shortened or edited to fit available space. All letters must be signed, although writers may request to have their names withheld.

Letters

- I deeply appreciated the last issue of Women's Concerns Report addressing widowhood (No. 73). As a pastor of a congregation including a number of widows and widowers, I'm aware of the long and ongoing struggle to adjust to single life after experiencing marriage. The personal stories shared in this issue sound much like the stories I have heard from women in our congregation. I want to affirm you and your colleagues for the good job you do in addressing current and relevant concerns of women in the church.
—Brenda Martin Hurst, Pastor, Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.
- The March-April issue, No. 71, on Women and Counseling, was excellent! Fortunately, in recent years many good resources have become available for those interested in learning about or developing skills in therapy with a feminist perspective. Here are three I have found most useful:

Young-Eisendrath and Florence Widemann.
Female Authority; Empowering Women Through Psychotherapy. N.Y.: Guilford Press. 1987.

Brody, Claire M., ed. *Women Therapists Working With Women*. N.Y.: Springer Publishing Co. 1984.

Women and Therapy, A Feminist Quarterly, published by Haworth Press, 75 Griswold Street, Binghamton, N.Y., 13904.

Unfortunately, like many professional journals and books, these are rather expensive. Many public libraries are surprisingly cooperative in ordering books requested by interested readers. Try your friendly feminist librarian!
—Ethel Yake Metzler, Goshen, Ind.

- I just received my first *Women's Concern Report* (No. 73 Widowhood). I found the paper very interesting and thought-provoking—and depressing. I don't think I need to explain why! I'm glad to be on the mailing list and be part of a "family" where women are equals. Many of the people in my little world see women as second-class citizens especially in the church.

—Irene Schroeder, Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

- I appreciate *Report*. It has been helpful to me in broad understandings. That is why I am a little disappointed with the Sept.-Oct. 1987 issue (No. 74 Wife Abuse). Janet Reedy mentions men who have suffered abuse (once). Otherwise, there is little mention of husband abuse. If you define spouse abuse, as you do on pages 1-2, as other than physical abuse, I find you one-sided.

You do claim that spouse abuse is 95 percent male-instigated. I would agree that might be accurate if you are talking about physical abuse. However, my experience as a pastor is that if you are talking about the other areas of sexual abuse, psychological abuse and emotional abuse, there is more nearly a "share-and-share-alike" pattern.

I challenge you to do an equally thorough study and publication of husband abuse and then we will see. Or isn't that a women's concern? It should be! Keep up the good work!

—Carl L. Smeltzer, Goshen, Ind.

Compiler's Reply: The MCC Domestic Violence Task Force shares your concern about men who are psychologically, emotionally or sexually abused by their wives. It is encouraging to hear that some abused men are seeking help.

To understand their experiences, we need to hear their stories. Almost all men have the potential to use their greater physical strength against their wives. They also usually have more economic independence. These factors make their experiences of spousal abuse different from women's experiences. Men's experiences as victims of domestic abuse need to be explored. I invite you to send us some anonymous stories about men you know who have been abused. I hope Report will accept your challenge to explore this issue further.

—Melita Rempel, staffperson, MCC Domestic Violence Task Force

- **Women Worldwide**

- *Twenty-five women in India came together for a summer seminar on women's development. They discussed adult education, nutrition and hygiene, women's legal rights, divorce, the security of women and India's dowry system. The seminar was sponsored by Howrah Women's Association, an organization supported by MCC. "I assured them of the support and interest of women*

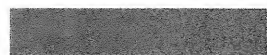
around the world," said MCCer Greti Peters, a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

- The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) celebrated its 10th anniversary during October. At a recent ceremony at U.N. headquarters in New York City, it honored representatives from six international projects it has supported.

- India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi *denounced the ritual death of a young widow in September calling it "utterly reprehensible and barbaric."* Roop Kanwar, an 18-year-old widow, was burned alive with her deceased husband's body in a religious ritual called suttee. More than a million Indians made a pilgrimage to the site believing they would draw spiritual benefits by

worshipping the act. "The incident is a national shame, and all right-thinking people should speak out against this and those who are glorifying the murder of a young woman," Gandhi said.

This will be the final installment of this column, in which we have been sharing the comments you wrote on the evaluation form included in the March-April issue. Again, thanks for your interest and thoughtful suggestions.



Reader

Feedback

- What do you like about Report? What are its strengths?

- It gets to the point—it treats *reality* instead of an ideal picture of what women should be.
- The wide range of subjects. The art. The reporting on what women are doing—it gives me hope! The inclusiveness. For once as a single middle-aged adult woman I feel "in."
- I like the thematic approach of each issue. The inclusiveness of wording and gender is also a strength.
- Although I enjoy reading the whole thing, I almost always turn first to "News and Verbs," then "Letters."
- I like the fact that each topic is introduced by a note from the editor.
- I enjoy "News and Verbs" but it seems that most of the action occurs outside the West Coast, which makes me think we're slower in affirming women in ministry here in the West Coast. *Report* has really been an encouragement to me.
- I have appreciated the honest dialogue found in *Report*. I have been reading it for years and generally read every issue cover to cover. It meets my needs and stimulates my thinking.
- Lay-out—especially the graphics and blurbs on the top of pages.
- I discover a great many bibliographic sources I'm interested in; immense help in understanding the issues that touch me so closely. This enhances self-understanding and relating to others.

- What do you dislike about Report? What areas need improvement?

- I was surprised at inarticulateness of issue when individual women "told their stories."
- Format falls apart so I staple it upon arrival before I give it to friends.
- "News and Verbs" is good, yet I feel it's just a carry-over of male power structure: a "see who is important" now mentality that tends to be focused on important positions, when so many of us are invisible in the power structure but doing important and/or groundbreaking work. . . We do need to recognize women who are making gains in a male-dominated church, but how to do it is a puzzle to me.
- Amount of space allowed for controversial viewpoints on issues could be increased.
- Specific information or "push" to renew subscriptions. I'm a strong financial supporter of MCC, but have never designated specific monies to this paper. Do you have available a "Reader's Guide" which indexes previous issues?
- The News and Verbs section seems to carry many of the same names. Not knowing your method for info gathering, I would like to see this broadened somehow.

- What are some issues you would like to see covered?

- How to understand humility as a significant virtue that doesn't lead to self-effacement, passivity, etc.
- Adoption issues such as open adoption and stories from Caucasian people who have adopted biracial, especially black-white, children.
- The uprooted Mennonite women, e.g., if there are no Mennonite churches nearby.
- More on stress, depression, self-esteem, etc.
- Ways to get women locked into the old systems to examine or even recognize what women like myself feel.
- Women in Latin America
- Mennonite women's spirituality; what aspect of Anabaptism is most important to individual women.

• Women's Resources

- The Washington-based Women's Research and Education Institute has released *Home-Based Employment: Implications for Working Women* by Cynthia B. Costello. The paper, available for \$4, reviews the history of industrial homework and presents the pros and cons of home-based industrial and clerical work for women

today. Send pre-payment to WREI at 1700 18th St. N.W., # 400, Washington, D.C. 20009.

- *Women Faithful for the Future* by Maria Riley is a recent publication from Center of Concern, an organization engaged in social analysis, theological reflection, policy advocacy and public education on issues of peace and justice. This booklet presents a

series of biblical and contemporary reflections on women's faithfulness throughout the ages. Cost is \$2 plus 15 percent shipping, available from Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017.

- *Women's Group Enterprises: A Study of the Structure of Opportunity on the Kenya Coast* is an anthropological

study of a women's income generation project in Coast Province, Kenya. It examines the reasons behind the successes and failures of women's cooperative village businesses. The study, which should be useful to others working at income-generation projects for African women, is available for \$20 from Candace Nelson, World Education, 210 Lincoln St., Boston, MA 02111.

News and Verbs

- Margaret Franz is the new conference editor of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. She has more than 25 years experience with the conference as teacher and librarian at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg.
- Barbara Unruh has been appointed associate personnel director for Mennonite Voluntary Service of the General Conference Mennonite Church. She also works part time as the assistant pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan. She had been program director for the Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp in Divide, Colo.
- Laura Schumm, a public health and hospice nurse for the Elkhart (Ind.) County Health Department, and her husband Dale Schumm, personnel director of Mennonite Board of Missions, are on a five-month MBM assignment in Asia. They are serving as consultants in human resource development and team-building to United Mission to Nepal and to an international assistance mission in Central Asia.
- Marilyn Miller, pastor of the Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church, and Bob and Dianne Carlsten of Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church were among a record 370 persons arrested for blocking entrances to the Rocky Flats Weapons Facility near Denver on August 9, the 42nd anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, Japan. Thirty lawyers of the National Lawyers Guild have volunteered to represent the protestors free of charge. The Rocky Flats plant produces the triggers for all nuclear bombs made in the United States.
- A group of women with cross-cultural experience headed by Dorothy Yoder Nyce of Goshen, Ind. has received a June Schwartzentruber Trust Fund award to produce a 20-minute slide set highlighting the strengths of Third World women. Applications for the next June Schwartzentruber award period must be in by March 31, 1988 and forms are available from Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, 131 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ontario N2L 1T7.
- Kathie Hershey, Esther Martin and Mary Samuel are new members of the board of trustees of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School.

- The following 17 women earned Master of Divinity degrees at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries this past summer: Mary E. Burkholder, pastor at Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ontario; Marcella J. Hershberger, who hopes to work at church growth; Rosa H. Hershberger, whose vocational goal is hospice/hospital chaplaincy; Norma Johnson, executive secretary for the General Conference Commission on Education; Mary Kauffmann-Kennel, gathered ministries leader at Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.; Terry Keller, who hopes to become involved in pastoral ministry; Deborah J. Kirkpatrick, resident in pastoral care and counseling at Royal Alexandra Hospitals, Edmonton, Alberta; Phyllis Kramer and Dorothy Arlene Kratz, both of whose goals are to work in pastoral ministry; Nancy S. Lapp, director of Campus Ministries, Goshen College; Rosalie Loeppky, continuing in clinical pastoral education at Health Sciences Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Kathy Rempel, counseling intern at Interfaith Pastoral Institute, University of Winnipeg; Sally Schreiner, Urban Congress director, SCUPE, Chicago; Sharon L. Speigle, associate pastor, Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio; Ann Weber-Becker, co-pastor, First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario; Joyce Wyse, who hopes to be involved in church planting; Brenda Yoder, who wants to work as a chaplain.

Completing Master of Arts in Theological Studies or Master of Arts in Peace Studies were: Marjorie Reimer Ediger, who hopes to work in hospital or hospice chaplaincy; Ann K. Gingrich, pastoral counselor at AMBS; Jean Brunk Greaser, member of Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.; Katherine Ediger Rempel, co-pastor with husband Ed at Locust Grove Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind.; Elizabeth G. Yoder, writer and editor.

Colleen Kliever, member of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City, Iowa, earned a Certificate in Theological Studies.

- Sylvia Shirk Charles, a Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Belgium, was among 2,800 participants at a recent World Congress of Women held in Moscow, Soviet Union.
- Karen Koppenhaver has been named associate director of publications at Hesston (Kan.) College. Her training is in English and creative writing, and she has worked as a consultant.
- Ed and Kathrine Rempel became pastoral leaders of Pueblo (Colo.) Mennonite Church in September.

• **We need your financial help** in defraying the costs of producing and distributing this newsletter. If you have not done so already, please consider an annual donation of \$6 (U.S. or Canadian). Send to Emily Will in the MCC Akron office or Peggy Regehr in the MCC Canada Winnipeg office.

• Illustrations in this issue were drawn by Teresa Pankratz of Chicago. Please do not reproduce without permission.



• We regret that space did not allow us to include two additional stories in this issue. We will send copies of them, however, to any interested reader. Carol Ann Weaver spins the lively account of a spunky girl with "a song in her air" who deeply questioned her heritage and faith on her road to becoming a composer and university music instructor. Potter and sculptor Anita Schrag Lehman relates the "evolving

process" in which her life as an artist "has flowed in and out and around my life as wife, mother, extended family member." Write to editor Emily Will for copies of these moving personal stories.

• **Ruth Stoltzfus Jost**, Columbus, Ohio, is chairperson of the Christian Peacemakers Team Steering Committee. Other women members are **Dorothy Friesen**, Chicago, Ill.; **Frances Jackson**, Philadelphia, Pa.; and **Hedy Sawatzky**, Amarillo, Texas.

• Former newspaper reporter **Shirlee Evans** is the author of *A Life in Her Hands*, a novel being published by Herald Press which dramatizes the dilemma and options facing a pregnant 15-year-old.

• **Shirley Miller** has been named assistant director of housing and resident services at Greencroft, a retirement community based in Goshen, Ind.

• **Grace Brunner** was licensed and installed as associate pastor of Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio, on Sept. 20. She serves alongside her husband, who is the pastor.

• **Miriam Book** led a seminar called "Who Owns My Time? Business and the Family" at the 1987 convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates. She is director of marketing at Philhaven Hospital, Mt. Gretna, Pa.

• A third Presbyterian Mennonite Peace Conference is planned for Feb. 5-7, 1988. With a focus on the family, it will include seminars on divorce and covenant, the healing of families, race and families, parenting, expressive peace games, Peace Tax Fund, and recovery from drug addiction. One of the goals is to compare Mennonite and Presbyterian approaches to family and peacemaking education. Ted and Gayle Gerber Koontz, teaching faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind., are among the featured speakers. For more information on the conference, to be held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., contact MCC U.S. Peace Section.

• **Erma Martin Yost** had a duo show with Leon Yost at the Signature Fine Arts Gallery in Harrisonburg, Va. from Sept. 19-Oct. 31.

• **Julia Schutz Jimenez** is the director of the Colegio Americano Menno in Cachipay, Colombia, a primary school started by four General Conference missionaries 40 years ago.

• MCC Peace Committee, an advisory group to MCC international peace staff, elected **Kathie Royer** of Elkhart, Ind, as its new chairperson. Other women members of the committee are **Evelyn Kreider** of Goshen, Ind. and **Patty Shelly** of North Newton, Kan.

• **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld**, a member of the inter-Mennonite Olive Branch Church, is part of a newly-created research team studying the social, emotional, familial and spiritual needs of Central Americans living in the Waterloo, Ontario area. The study seeks to determine how the local church community can better respond to and more fully benefit from the newcomers.

REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *REPORT* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Commit-

tee on Women's Concerns.

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